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PRINCIPAL

HAITIAN ASSOCIATION

The Haitian Association of Canada wishes to voice publicly its solidarity and support to the black people and all the other persons arrested by the police during the events which occurred at Sir George Williams University on February the 11th, 1969

The Association feels that the Administration of Sir George Williams is directly responsible for these events. The Administration has shown a high degree of bad faith, cynicism, negligence and irresponsibility in its handling of the whole affair. It has attempted to hide its racism and authoritarianism behind the screen of dilatory and tortuous procedure, all the while scoffing at the legitimate demands of the black students. It cut off all channels for dialogue and negotiations by unexpectedly retracting promises made the day before. It has knowingly and calculatingly started these incidents by being the first to advocate the use of force. Finally it gave the measure of its arrogance and haughtiness by reinstating, in no time flat, Mr. Anderson who has consequently been arbitrarily exonerated of all accusations brought against him.

The Association is of the opinion that the attitude of Sir George Williams Administration is a striking illustration of racism as it is manifest in Canadian Society. For, although racial segregation is not legalized and systematic in Canada, nonetheless racial discrimination is deeply rooted in its institutions and tenacious prejudices are ingrained in the mentality, habits and psychological reflexes of the great majority of the population. The incidents which occurred at Sir George Williams constitute a reaction against manifestations of racism in Canadian society. It is only by properly placing these events in their socio-political context that we can grasp their true meaning and implications and determine their direct and indirect, immediate and remote causes.

The association denounces the pseudolegal and hypocritical attitude of the police authorities and the private prosecutors who, by mere distortion of facts, have been attempting to convert the affair into a "premeditated common-law-offense" committed by a group of "delinquents".

The Association blames the partial, narrow-minded and shabby attitude of the mass media. Indeed, in the great majority of reports and articles on this affaire, the emphasis was put solely on the millions of damage caused by a "bunch of enraged black and adolescents". No mention was made of the event as a whole which led up to and culminated in these incidents; nor were the underlying problems alluded to. Anderson who has consequently been arbitrarily exonerated of all accusations brought against him.

The Association condemns the frenzied agitation of racist and reactionary groups who have been attempting to use this incident to awake and stir up racist and chauvinistic reflexes in the population and release a wave of anti-black and anti-student hysteria. segregation is not legalized and systematic in Canada, nonetheless racial discrimination is deeply rooted in its institutions and tenacious prejudices are ingrained in the mentality, habits and psychological reflexes of the great majority of the population. The incidents which occurred at Sir George Williams constitute a reaction against manifestations of racism in Canadian society.

The Association is alarmed at the strange and unusual treatment dealt the persons involved in this incident. Bails, at first denied, have been extremely long and difficult to be obtained and immense sums disproportionate in respect to the charges laid against the accused have been demanded. In the light of these facts we can well anticipate the atmosphere of prejudice, hostility and discrimination which is likely to prevail during the trial.

The Haitian Association of Canada is prepared to participate actively in any positive and constructive initiative: either to provide financial and moral support to the accused during the trial or to exert pressure, pressure that could induce those authorities concerned to bring to the fore all aspects and implications of the SGWU affair and follow up with adequate measures.

Montreal, March 25, 1969